RILEY SONGS O'CHEER

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/songsocheer0000jame_i9i2

These Books were bought
a few days before the Great
Earthquake and Fire
April 18th to 21st 1906

For Gladys
from Granma

Books by
James Whitcomb Riley

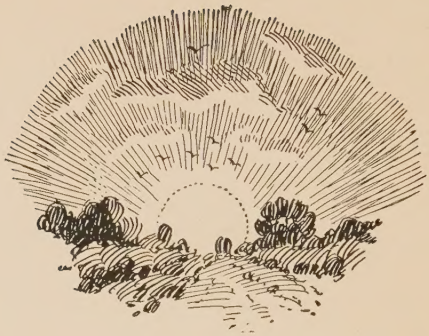
◆◆◆

NEGHBORLY POEMS
SKETCHES IN PROSE WITH INTERLUDING VERSES
AFTERWHILES
PIPES O' PAN AT ZEKESBURY (Prose and Verse)
RHYMES OF CHILDHOOD
THE FLYING ISLANDS OF THE NIGHT
GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS
ARMAZINDY
A CHILD-WORLD
HOME-FOLKS
HIS PA'S ROMANCE (Portrait by Clay)

GREENFIELD EDITION

Sold only in sets. Eleven volumes uniformly bound in sage-green cloth, gilt top.....$13.50
The same in half-calf..... 27.00

OLD-FASHIONED ROSES (English Edition)
THE GOLDEN YEAR (English Edition)
POEMS HERE AT HOME
RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS
THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN
RILEY CHILD-RHYMES (Pictures by Vawter)
RILEY LOVE-LYRICS (Pictures by Dyer)
RILEY FARM-RHYMES (Pictures by Vawter)
RILEY SONGS O' CHEER (Pictures by Vawter)
AN OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE (Pictures by Christy)
OUT TO OLD AUNT MARY'S (Pictures by Christy)
A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS (Forty Pictures by Relyea and Vawter)



SONGS O' CHEER

MY GRAMPA he's a-allus sayin',
"Sing a song o' cheer!"—
And, wunst I says "What kind *is* them?"
He says,—"The kind to *hear*.—
'Cause they're the songs that *Nature* sings,
In ever' bird that twitters!"
"Well, *whipperwills* and *doves*," says I,
"Hain't over-cheery critters!"
"Then don't you sing like *them*," he says—
"Ner *guinny-hens*, my dear—
Ner *peafowls* nuther (drat the boy!)
You sing a song o' cheer!"
I can't sing nothin' anyhow;
But, comin' home, to'rds night,
I kindo'-sorto' kep' a-whistlin'
"Old—Bob—White!"

RILEY

SONGS O' CHEER

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WITH PICTURES BY
WILL VAWTER

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

Copyright, 1883, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1894, 1896, 1897
1898, 1900, 1901, 1903, 1904, 1905

by

James Whitcomb Riley
All Rights Reserved

PRINTED BY
CHARLES FRANCIS PRESS
NEW YORK

DEDICATION

To

BLISS CARMAN

He is the morning's poet—
The bard of mount and moor,
The minstrel fine of dewy shine,
The dawning's troubadour:

The brother of the bluebird,
'Mid blossoms, throng on throng,
Whose singing calls, o'er orchard walls,
Seem glitterings of song:

He meets, with brow uncovered,
The sunrise through the mist,
With raptured eyes that range the skies
And seas of amethyst:

The brambled rose clings to him:
The breezy wood receives
Him as the guest she loves the best
And laughs through all her leaves:

Pan and his nymphs and dryads
They hear, in breathless pause,
This earth-born wight lilt his delight,
And envy him because . . . .

He is the morning's poet—
The bard of mount and moor,
The minstrel fine of dewy shine,
The dawning's troubadour.

CONTENTS

All-Golden, The 83
At Broad Ripple 155
At Utter Loaf 120
Autumn 176
Away 76
Babyhood 55
Billy Miller's Circus-Show 139
Blossoms on the Trees, The 23
Boy's Mother, A 124
Christmas Carol, A 167
Dan Paine 111
Dawn, Noon and Dewfall 116
Exceeding All 127
First Bluebird, The 64
Full Harvest, A 160
Funniest Thing in the World, The 100
God Bless Us Every One 191
Granny 25
Harper, The 168
Hereafter, The 108
Her Smile of Cheer and Voice of Song . . 164
Hired Man's Faith in Children, The . . . 143
Hymb of Faith, A 29
Kissing the Rod 119
Laughter 46
Let Something Good Be Said 163
Light of Love, The 80

CONTENTS—Continued

LITTLE DAVID 159
LITTLE-RED-APPLE TREE, THE 47
LOVELY CHILD, THE 34
MISTER HOP-TOAD 41
MY FIDDLE 103
MY PHILOSOFY 67
NOON INTERVAL, A 144
OLD MAN'S MEMORY, AN 37
ON ANY ORDENARY MAN IN A HIGH STATE OF LAUGHTURE AND DELIGHT 151
OUR QUEER OLD WORLD 50
PASSING HAIL, A 147
PRAYER PERFECT, THE 105
RAPTURE OF THE YEAR, THE 19
SCHOOLBOY'S FAVORITE, THE 171
SONG OF THE ROAD, A 72
SUMMER'S DAY, A 05
THERE IS EVER A SONG SOMEWHERE 187
THERE WAS A CHERRY-TREE 152
TWINS, THE 132
UNLESS 88
WE TO SIGH INSTEAD OF SING 109
WHATEVER THE WEATHER MAY BE 91
WHILE THE HEART BEATS YOUNG 128
WHO BIDES HIS TIME 51
WILLOW, THE 136

ILLUSTRATIONS

My Grampa He's a-Allus Sayin', "Sing a Song o' Cheer!" . . . . . *Frontispiece*
The Rapture of the Year—Title 19
While School-Girls Sweet, in Lane or Street . 21
The Blossoms on the Trees—Title . . . 23
The Blossoms on the Trees—Tailpiece . . . 24
Granny—Title 25
Tells Us All the Fairy Tales 27
A Hymb of Faith—Title 29
Ef Storms and Tempests Dred to See . . . 31
The Lovely Child—Title 34
Could There Be a Sweeter Thing 35
An Old Man's Memory—Title 37
To Smile His Godspeed on the Plow 39
Mister Hop-Toad—Title 41
Straighten Up and H'ist Your Head 43
Mister Hop-Toad—Tailpiece 45
Laughter—Title 46
The Little-Red-Apple Tree—Title 47
When I Was the Littlest Bit of a Boy . . . 49
Who Bides His Time—Title 51
Joy Runs to Meet Him, Drawing Near . . . 53
Babyhood—Title 55
Take This Eager Hand of Mine 57
Fer Them 'At's Here in Airliest Infant Stages . 61
It's a Purty Good World, Old Man! 63
And When That Bluebird Sung 65

ILLUSTRATIONS—Continued

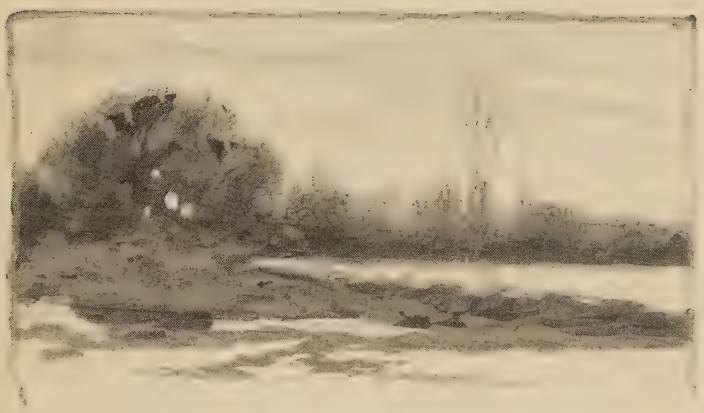
My Philosofy—Title 67
There Is Times When All Alone 69
A Song of the Road—Title 72
The Road You Take 's the Path o' Love . . . 73
Away—Title 76
With a Wave of the Hand 77
But What Care We For Light Above? . . . 81
The All-Golden—Title 83
Where Reeds and Running Waters Are . . . 85
The All-Golden—Tailpiece 87
Who Has Not Wanted Does Not Guess What Plenty Is 89
Whatever the Weather May Be—Title . . . 91
The World of Gloom Is a World of Glee . . 93
And Watchin' Clos't, With Upturned Eyes . . 97
The Funniest Thing in the World—Title . . 100
Watchin' the Monkeys 'at's in the Show! . . . 101
My Fiddle—Title 103
"The Old Fat Gal", and "Rye-Straw" and "My Sailyor's on the Sea" 105
My Fiddle—Tailpiece 107
The Hereafter—Title 108
We to Sigh Instead of Sing—Title 109
Dan Paine—Title 111
While Thy Warm Soul Shines Out, Dan Paine . 113
Dan Paine—Tailpiece 115
On the Apern o' the Dam, Legs a-Danglin' Over . 117
At Utter Loaf—Title 120

ILLUSTRATIONS—Continued

THE BOUGHS ABOVE ME SPREAD A SHADE . . . 121
AN' GRABS ME UP AN' PATS MY HEAD 125
EXCEEDING ALL—TITLE 127
WHILE THE HEART BEATS YOUNG—TITLE . . 128
OUR BARE FEET IN THE MEADOWS 129
THE TWINS—TITLE 132
JES' THE BOSSEST PAIR O' BABIES 'AT A MORTAL EVER SAW! 133
THE WILLOW—TITLE 136
IN SHADY PLACES PEERING UP WITH GLIMMERING PEBBLES 137
BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS-SHOW 139
HE'S "THE OLD CLOWN", AN' GOT ON CLO'ES . . . 141
THE HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN—TITLE . . 143
A NOON INTERVAL—TITLE 144
A DEEP DELICIOUS HUSH IN EARTH AND SKY . . 145
LET US REST OURSELVES A BIT 149
ON ANY ORDENARY MAN IN A HIGH STATE OF LAUGHTURE AND DELIGHT—TITLE 151
THERE WAS A CHERRY-TREE—TITLE 152
THERE WAS A BLOOM OF SNOW—THERE WAS A BOY . 153
AT BROAD RIPPLE—TITLE 155
I BAIT MY HOOK AND CAST MY LINE 157
LITTLE DAVID—TITLE 159
A FULL HARVEST—TITLE 160
JES' LOOKY HYONDER, HEY? 161
OF DEWY MORNING—BUDS AND BLOOMS 165
AND THERE WAS THE LITTLE BED IN THE CORNER OF THE GARRET 169

The Schoolboy's Favorite—Title 171
Over the River and Through the Wood 173
Autumn—Title 176
Faring Down Some Woody Trail 177
Singing Slanted Strands of Rain 181
With the Tawny Laziness of the Gold that Ophir Knew 185
There Is Ever a Song Somewhere—Title . . . 187
There Is Ever a Song That Our Hearts May Hear 189
God Bless Us Every One—Title 191
And Thus He Prayed, "God Bless Us Every One!" . 193
End Picture 194

RILEY SONGS O' CHEER



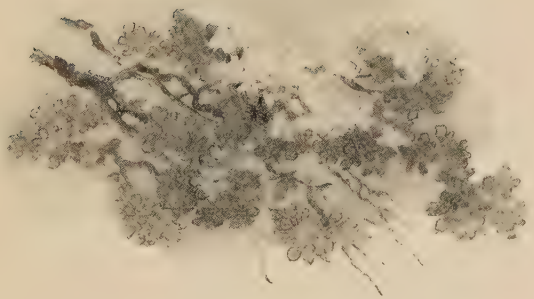
THE RAPTURE OF THE YEAR

WHILE skies glint bright with bluest light
Through clouds that race o'er field and town,
And leaves go dancing left and right,
And orchard apples tumble down;
While school-girls sweet, in lane or street,
Lean 'gainst the wind and feel and hear
Its glad heart like a lover's beat,—
So reigns the rapture of the year.

Then ho! and hey! and whoop-hooray!
Though winter clouds be looming,
Remember a November day
Is merrier than mildest May
With all her blossoms blooming.

While birds in scattered flight are blown
Aloft and lost in dusky mist,
And truant boys scud home alone
'Neath skies of gold and amethyst;
While twilight falls, and Echo calls
Across the haunted atmosphere,
With low, sweet laughs at intervals,—
So reigns the rapture of the year.

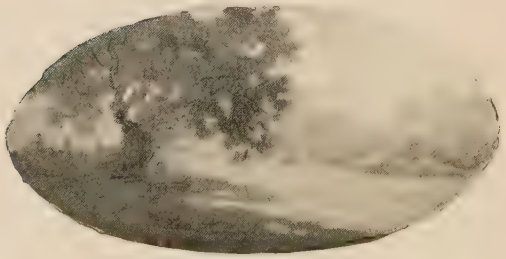
Then ho! and hey! and whoop-hooray!
Though winter clouds be looming,
Remember a November day
Is merrier than mildest May
With all her blossoms blooming.



THE BLOSSOMS ON THE TREES

BLOSSOMS crimson, white, or blue,
Purple, pink, and every hue,
From sunny skies, to tintings drowned
In dusky drops of dew,
I praise you all, wherever found,
And love you through and through; —
But, Blossoms On The Trees,
With your breath upon the breeze,
There's nothing all the world around
As half as sweet as you!

Could the rhymer only wring
All the sweetness to the lees
Of all the kisses clustering
In juicy Used-to-bes,
To dip his rhymes therein and sing
The blossoms on the trees,—
"O Blossoms on the Trees,"
He would twitter, trill, and coo,
"However sweet, such songs as these
Are not as sweet as you:—
For you are *blooming* melodies
The *eyes* may listen to!"



GRANNY

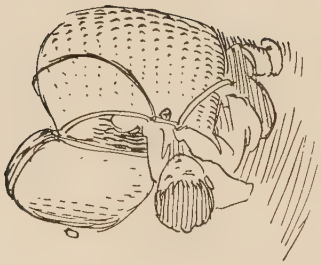
GRANNY'S come to our house,
And ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,
And fetched a pear fer all the pack
That runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,
And Wade and Silas Walker
Both's a-ridin' on her foot,
And 'Pollos on the rocker;
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,
And little Orphant Annie,
All's a-eatin' gingerbread
And giggle-un at Granny!

Tells us all the fairy tales
Ever thought er wundered —
And 'bundance o' other stories —
Bet she knows a hunderd! —
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"
And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,
Listenin' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;
And "Bean-Stalk" 's another! —
So's the one of "Cinderell'"
And her old godmother; —
That-un's best of all the rest —
Bestest one of any, —
Where the mices scampers home
Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,
Ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,
And fetched a pear fer all the pack
That runs to kiss their Granny!



A HYMB OF FAITH

So ran the honest, earnest prayer
Of old Benj. Johnson, pleading there.

O THOU that doth all things devise
And fashon fer the best,
He'p us who sees with mortul eyes
To overlook the rest.

They's times, of course, we grope in doubt,
And in afflictions sore;
So knock the louder, Lord, without,
And we'll unlock the door.

Make us to feel, when times looks bad
And tears in pitty melts,
Thou wast the only he'p we had
When they was nothin' else.

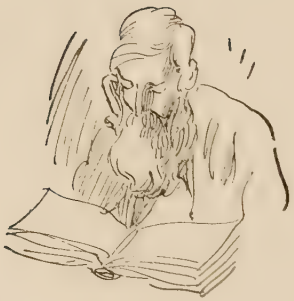
Death comes alike to ev'ry man
That ever was borned on earth;
Then let us do the best we can
To live fer all life's wurth.

Ef storms and tempusts dred to see
Makes black the heavens ore,
They done the same in Galilee
Two thousand years before.

But after all, the golden sun
Poured out its floods on them
That watched and waited fer the One
Then borned in Bethlyham.

Also, the star of Holy Writ
Made noonday of the night,
Whilse other stars that looked at it
Was envious with delight.

The sages then in wurship bowed,
From ev'ry clime so fare;
O, sinner, think of that glad crowd
That congergated thare!



They was content to fall in ranks
  With One that knowed the way
From good old Jurden's stormy banks
  Clean up to Jedgmunt Day.

No matter, then, how all is mixed
  In our near-sighted eyes,
All things is fer the best, and fixed
  Out straight in Paradise.

Then take things as God sends 'em here,
  And, ef we live er die,
Be more and more contenteder,
  Without a-astin' why.

O Thou that doth all things devise
  And fashon fer the best,
He'p us who sees with mortul eyes
  To overlook the rest.

THE LOVELY CHILD

LILIES are both pure and fair,
Growing midst the roses there —
Roses, too, both red and pink,
Are quite beautiful, I think.

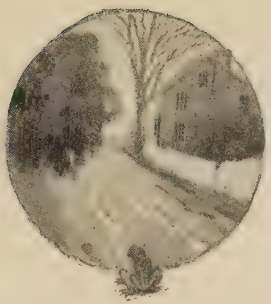
But of all bright blossoms — best —
Purest — fairest — loveliest,—
Could there be a sweeter thing
Than a primrose, blossoming?

AN OLD MAN'S MEMORY

THE delights of our childhood is soon passed away,
And our gloryus youth it departs,—
And yit, dead and burried, they's blossoms of May
Ore theyr medderland graves in our harts.
So, friends of my bare-footed days on the farm,
Whether truant in city er not,
God prosper you, same as He's prosperin' me,
Whilse your past haint despised er fergot!

Oh! they's nothin', at morn, that's as grand unto me
As the glorys of Nachur so fare,—
With the Spring in the breeze, and the bloom in the trees,
And the hum of the bees ev'rywhere!
The green in the woods, and the birds in the boughs,
And the dew spangled over the fields;
And the bah of the sheep and the bawl of the cows
And the call from the house to your meals!

Then ho! fer your brekfast! and ho! fer the toil
That waiteth alike man and beast!
Oh! it's soon with my team I'll be turnin' up soil,
Whilse the sun shoulders up in the East
Ore the tops of the ellums and beeches and oaks,
To smile his godspeed on the plow,
And the furry and seed, and the Man in his need,
And the joy of the swet of his brow!



MISTER HOP-TOAD

HOWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sence I seen you hereabout.
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!
Plows like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over even;
Loam's like gingerbread, and clods's softer'n deceivin'—
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true — Springtime — don't
you love it?
You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh, oh, oh!
I grabs up my old hoe;
But I sees *you,*
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

Make yourse'f more cumfo'bler — square round at your ease —
Don't set saggin' slanchwise, with your nose below your knees.
Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see you swaller;
Straighten up and h'ist your head! — *You* don't owe a dollar! —
Hain't no mor'gage on your land — ner no taxes, nuther;
You don't haf to work no roads — even ef you'd ruther!
'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I railly wouldn't keer
To swop fer life and hop right in the presidential cheer!

Oh, oh, oh!
I hauls back my old hoe;
But I sees *you,*
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

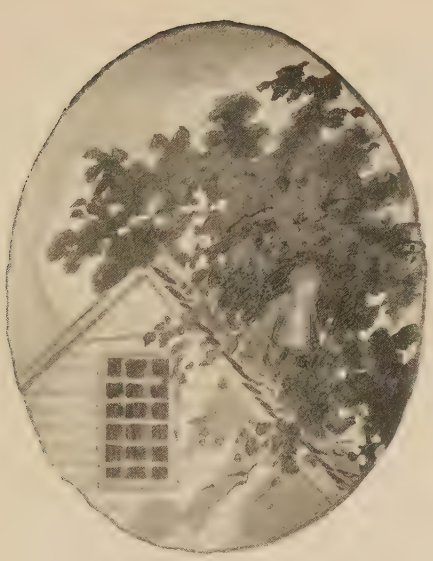
Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the hurry? —
Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you back and smiled? —
W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like a child!

S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you air? —
S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts you wear?
Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed rowdy! —
Hain't you got a word to say? — Won't you tell me "Howdy"?

Oh, oh, oh!
I swish round my old hoe;
But I sees *you,*
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

LAUGHTER

WITHIN the cosiest corner of my dreams
He sits, high-throned above all gods that be
Portrayed in marble-cold mythology,
Since from his joyous eyes a twinkle gleams
So warm with life and light it ever seems
Spraying in mists of sunshine over me,
And mingled with such rippling ecstasy
As overleaps his lips in laughing streams.
Ho! look on him, and say if he be old
Or youthful! Hand in hand with gray old Time
He toddled when an infant; and, behold! —
He hath not aged, but to the lusty prime
Of babyhood,—his brow a trifle bold —
His hair a ravelled nimbus of gray gold.



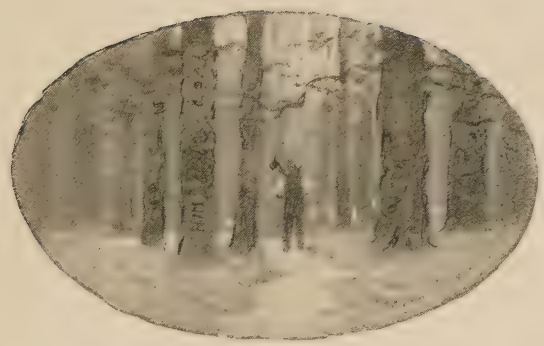
THE LITTLE-RED-APPLE TREE

THE Little-red-apple Tree!—
O The Little-red-apple Tree!
When I was the little-est bit of a boy
And you were a boy with me!
The bluebird's flight from the topmost boughs,
And the boys up there—so high
That we rocked over the roof of the house
And whooped as the winds went by!

Hey! The Little-red-apple Tree!
With the garden-beds below,
And the old grape-arbor so welcomely
Hiding the rake and hoe!
Hiding, too, as the sun dripped through
In spatters of wasted gold,
Frank and Amy away from you
And me in the days of old!

The Little-red-apple Tree!—
In the edge of the garden-spot,
Where the apples fell so lavishly
Into the neighbor's lot;—
So do I think of you alway,
Brother of mine, as the tree,—
Giving the ripest wealth of your love
To the world as well as me.

Ho! The Little-red-apple Tree!
Sweet as its juiciest fruit
Spanged on the palate spicily,
And rolled o'er the tongue to boot,
Is the memory still and the joy
Of The Little-red-apple Tree,
When I was the little-est bit of a boy
And you were a boy with me!



WHO BIDES HIS TIME

WHO bides his time, and day by day
Faces defeat full patiently,
And lifts a mirthful roundelay,
However poor his fortunes be,—
He will not fail in any qualm
Of poverty — the paltry dime
It will grow golden in his palm,
Who bides his time.

Who bides his time — he tastes the sweet
  Of honey in the saltest tear;
And though he fares with slowest feet,
  Joy runs to meet him, drawing near;
The birds are heralds of his cause;
  And, like a never-ending rhyme,
The roadsides bloom in his applause
    Who bides his time.

Who bides his time, and fevers not
  In the hot race that none achieves,
Shall wear cool-wreathen laurel, wrought
  With crimson berries in the leaves;
And he shall reign a goodly king,
  And sway his hand o'er every clime
With peace writ on his signet-ring,
    Who bides his time.

BABYHOOD

HEIGH-HO! Babyhood! Tell me where you linger!
Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray;
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger
Back to the lotus-lands of the far-away!

Turn back the leaves of life.— Don't read the story.—
Let's find the pictures, and fancy all the rest;
We can fill the written pages with a brighter glory
Than old Time, the story-teller, at his very best.

Turn to the brook where the honeysuckle tipping
O'er its vase of perfume spills it on the breeze,
And the bee and humming-bird in ecstasy are sipping
From the fairy-flagons of the blooming locust-trees.

Turn to the lane where we used to "teeter-totter,"
Printing little foot-palms in the mellow mould —
Laughing at the lazy cattle wading in the water
Where the ripples dimple round the buttercups of gold.

Where the dusky turtle lies basking on the gravel
Of the sunny sand-bar in the middle tide,
And the ghostly dragon-fly pauses in his travel
To rest like a blossom where the water-lily died.

Heigh-ho! Babyhood! Tell me where you linger!
Let's toddle home again, for we have gone astray;
Take this eager hand of mine and lead me by the finger
Back to the lotus-lands of the far-away!

OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

Fer them 'at's here in airliest infant stages,
It's a hard world:
Fer them 'at gits the knocks of boyhood's ages,
It's a mean world:
Fer them 'at nothin's good enough they're gittin',
It's a bad world:
Fer them 'at learns at last what's right and fittin',
It's a good world.

THE HIRED MAN.

IT'S a purty hard world you find, my child —
It's a purty hard world you find!
You fight, little rascal! and kick and squall,
And snort out medicine, spoon and all!
When you're here longer you'll change yer mind
And simmer down sorto' half-rickonciled.
But *now* — Jee!-
My!-mun-nee!
It's a purty hard world, my child!

It's a purty mean world you're in, my lad —
  It's a purty mean world you're in!
We know, of course, in your schoolboy-days
It's a world of too many troublesome ways
  Of tryin' things over and startin' ag'in,—
Yit *your* chance beats what your *parents* had.
    But *now* — O!
    Fire-and-tow!
It's a purty mean world, my lad!

It's a purty bad world you've struck, young chap —
  It's a purty bad world you've struck —
But *study* the cards that you hold, you know,
And your hopes will sprout and your mustache grow,
  And your store-clothes likely will change your
    luck,
And you'll rake a rich ladybird into yer lap!
    But *now*— Doubt
    All things out.—
It's a purty mean world, young chap!

It's a purty good world this is, old man —
  It's a purty good world this is!
For all its follies and shows and lies —
It's rainy weather, and cheeks likewise,
  And age, hard-hearin' and rheumatiz.—
We're not a-faultin' the Lord's own plan —
    All things jest
    At their best.—
It's a purty good world, old man!

THE FIRST BLUEBIRD

The very first bluebird of Spring,
As old Benj. Johnson heard him sing.

JEST rain and snow! and rain again!
And dribble! drip! and blow!
Then snow! and thaw! and slush! and then —
Some more rain and snow!

This morning I was 'most afeard
To *wake* up — when, i jing!
I seen the sun shine out and heerd
The first bluebird of Spring! —
Mother she'd raised the winder some; —
And in acrost the orchurd come,
Soft as a angel's wing,
A breezy, treesy, beesy hum,
Too sweet fer anything!

The winter's shroud was rent a-part —
The sun bust forth in glee, —
And when that *bluebird* sung, my hart
Hopped out o' bed with me!

MY PHILOSOFY

I AIN'T, ner don't p'tend to be,
Much posted on philosofy;
But thare is times when, all alone,
I work out idees of my own.
And of these same thare is a few
I'd like to jest refer to you —
Pervidin' that you don't object
To listen clos't and rickollect.

I allus argy that a man
Who does about the best he can
Is plenty good enugh to suit
This lower mundane institute —
No matter ef his daily walk
Is subject fer his neghbor's talk,
And critic-minds of ev'ry whim
Jest all git up and go fer him!

I knowed a feller onc't that had
The yeller-janders mighty bad,—
And each and ev'ry friend he'd meet
Would stop and give him some receet
Fer cuorin' of 'em. But he'd say
He kindo' thought they'd go away
Without no medicin', and boast
That he'd git well without one doste.

He kep' a-yellerin' on — and they
Perdictin' that he'd die some day
Before he knowed it! Tuk his bed,
The feller did, and lost his head
And wundered in his mind a spell —
Then rallied, and, at last, got well;
But ev'ry friend that said he'd die
Went back on him eternally!

Its natchurl enugh, I guess,
When some gits more and some gits less,
Fer them-uns on the slimmest side
To claim it ain't a fare divide;
And I've knowed some to lay and wait,
And git up soon, and set up late,
To ketch some feller they could hate
Fer goin' at a faster gait.

The signs is bad when folks commence
A-findin' fault with Providence,
And balkin' 'cause the earth don't shake
At ev'ry prancin' step they take.
No man is grate tel he can see
How less than little he would be
Ef stripped to self, and stark and bare
He hung his sign out anywhare.

My doctern is to lay aside
Contensions, and be satisfied:
Jest do your best, and praise er blame
That follers that, counts jest the same.
I've allus noticed grate success
Is mixed with troubles, more er less,
And it's the man who does the best
That gits more kicks than all the rest.

A SONG OF THE ROAD

O I WILL walk with you, my lad, whichever way you
fare,
You'll have me, too, the side o' you, with heart as light
as air;
No care for where the road you take's a-leadin'— *any*-
where,—
It can but be a joyful ja'nt the whilst *you* journey there.
The road you take's the path o' love, an' that's the bridth
o' two —
An' I will walk with you, my lad — O I will walk with
you.

Ho! I will walk with you, my lad,
Be weather black or blue
Or roadsides frost or dew, my lad —
O I will walk with you.

Aye, glad, my lad, I'll walk with you, whatever winds
may blow,
Or summer blossoms stay our steps, or blinding drifts of
snow;
The way that you set face an' foot 's the way that I
will go,
An' brave I'll be, abreast o' ye, the Saints an' Angels
know!
With loyal hand in loyal hand, an' one Heart made o'
two,
Through summer's gold, or winter's cold, it's I will walk
with you.

Sure, I will walk with you, my lad,
As love ordains me to,—
To Heaven's door, an' through, my lad,
O I will walk with you.

AWAY

I CANNOT say, and I will not say
That he is dead.—He is just away!

With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,

And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there.

And you — O you, who the wildest yearn
For the old-time step and the glad return,—

Think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of There as the love of Here;

And loyal still, as he gave the blows
Of his warrior-strength to his country's foes.—

Mild and gentle, as he was brave,—
When the sweetest love of his life he gave

To simple things: — Where the violets grew
Blue as the eyes they were likened to,

The touches of his hands have strayed
As reverently as his lips have prayed:

When the little brown thrush that harshly chirred
Was dear to him as the mocking-bird;

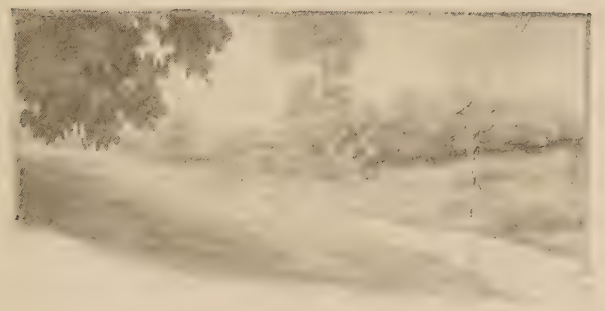
And he pitied as much as a man in pain
A writhing honey-bee wet with rain.—

Think of him still as the same, I say:
He is not dead — he is just away!

THE LIGHT OF LOVE

THE clouds have deepened o'er the night
Till, through the dark profound,
The moon is but a stain of light
And all the stars are drowned;
And all the stars are drowned, my love,
And all the skies are drear;
But what care we for light above,
If light of love is here?

The wind is like a wounded thing
That beats about the gloom
With baffled breast and drooping wing
And wail of deepest doom;
And wail of deepest doom, my love;
But what have we to fear
From night, or rain, or winds above,
With love and laughter here?



THE ALL-GOLDEN

I

THROUGH every happy line I sing
I feel the tonic of the Spring.
The day is like an old-time face
That gleams across some grassy place;
An old-time face — an old-time chum
Who rises from the grave to come
And lure me back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays.
Sweet day! to thus remind me of
The truant boy I used to love —
To set once more his finger-tips
Against the blossom of his lips,
And pipe for me the signal known
By none but him and me alone!

II

I see, across the school-room floor,
The shadow of the open door,
And dancing dust and sunshine blent
Slanting the way the morning went,
And beckoning my thoughts afar
Where reeds and running waters are;
Where amber-colored bayous glass
The half-drown'd weeds and wisps of grass,
Where sprawling frogs, in loveless key,
Sing on and on incessantly.
Against the green wood's dim expanse
The cattail tilts its tufted lance,
While on its tip — one might declare
The white "snake-feeder" blossomed there!

III

I catch my breath as children do
In woodland swings when life is new
And all the blood is warm as wine
And tingles with a tang divine.

My soul soars up the atmosphere
And sings aloud where God can hear,
And all my being leans intent
To mark His smiling wonderment.
O gracious dream, and gracious time,
And gracious theme, and gracious rhyme —
When buds of Spring begin to blow
In blossoms that we used to know
And lure us back along the ways
Of time's all-golden yesterdays!

UNLESS

WHO has not wanted, does not guess
What plenty is.— Who has not groped
In depths of doubt and hopelessness,
Has never truly hoped.—
Unless, sometimes, a shadow falls
Upon his mirth, and veils his sight,
And from the darkness drifts the light
Of love at intervals.

And that most dear of everything,
I hold, is love; and who can sit
With lightest heart and laugh and sing,
Knows not the worth of it.—
Unless, in some strange throng, perchance,
He feels how thrilling sweet it is,
One yearning look that answers his —
The troth of glance and glance.

Who knows not pain, knows not, alas!
What pleasure is.— Who knows not of
The bitter cup that will not pass,
Knows not the taste of love.
O souls that thirst, and hearts that fast,
And natures faint with famishing,
God lift and lead and safely bring
You to your own at last!

WHATEVER THE WEATHER MAY BE

"WHATEVER the weather may be," says he —
"Whatever the weather may be,
It's plaze, if ye will, an' I'll say me say,—
Supposin' to-day was the winterest day,
Wud the weather be changing because ye cried,
Or the snow be grass were ye crucified?
The best is to make yer own summer," says he,
"Whatever the weather may be," says he —
"Whatever the weather may be!

"Whatever the weather may be," says he —
"Whatever the weather may be,
It's the songs ye sing, an' the smiles ye wear,
That's a-makin' the sun shine everywhere;
An' the world of gloom is a world of glee,
Wid the bird in the bush, an' the bud in the tree,
An' the fruit on the stim o' the bough," says he,
"Whatever the weather may be," says he —
"Whatever the weather may be!

"Whatever the weather may be," says he —
"Whatever the weather may be,
Ye can bring the Spring, wid its green an' gold,
An' the grass in the grove where the snow lies cold;
An' ye'll warm yer back, wid a smiling face,
As ye sit at yer heart, like an owld fire-place,
An' toast the toes o' yer sowl," says he,
"Whatever the weather may be," says he —
"Whatever the weather may be!"

A SUMMER'S DAY

A summer day — so seems it,
As old Benj. Johnson dreams it.

THE Summer's putt the idy in
My head that I'm a boy again;
And all around's so bright and gay
I want to putt my team away,
And jest git out whare I can lay
And soak my hide full of the day!
But work is work, and must be done —
Yit, as I work, I have my fun,
Jest fancyin' these furries here
Is childhood's paths onc't more so dear: —
And so I walk through medder-lands,
And country lanes, and swampy trails
Whare long bullrushes bresh my hands;
And, tilted on the ridered rails
Of deadnin' fences, "Old Bob White"
Whissels his name in high delight
And whirrs away. I wunder still,
Whichever way a boy's feet will —

Whare trees has fell, with tangled tops
  Whare dead leaves shakes, I stop fer breth,
Heerin' the acorn as it drops —
  H'istin' my chin up still as deth,
And watchin' clos't, with upturned eyes,
The tree where Mr. Squirrel tries
To hide hisse'f above the limb,
But lets his own tale tell on him.
I wunder on in deeper glooms —
  Git hungry, hearin' female cries
From old farm-houses, whare perfumes
  Of harvest dinners seems to rise
And ta'nt a feller, hart and brane,
With memories he can't explane.

I wunder through the underbresh,
  Whare pig-tracks, pintin' to'rds the crick,
Is picked and printed in the fresh
  Black bottom-lands, like wimmern pick
Theyr pie-crusts with a fork, some way,
When bakin' fer camp-meetin' day.
I wunder on and on and on,
Tel my gray hair and beard is gone,

And ev'ry wrinkle on my brow
Is rubbed clean out and shaddered now
With curls as brown and fare and fine
As tenderls of the wild grape-vine
That ust to climb the highest tree
To keep the ripest ones fer me.
I wunder still, and here I am
Wadin' the ford below the dam —
The worter chucklin' round my knee
  At hornet-welt and bramble-scratch,
And me a-slippin' 'crost to see
  Ef Tyner's plums is ripe, and size
The old man's wortermelon-patch,
  With juicy mouth and drouthy eyes.
Then, after sich a day of mirth
And happiness as worlds is wurth —
  So tired that heaven seems nigh about,—
The sweetest tiredness on earth
  Is to git home and flatten out —
So tired you can't lay flat enugh,
And sorto' wish that you could spred
Out like molasses on the bed
And jest drip off the aidges in
The dreams that never comes again.

THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD

THE funniest thing in the world, I know,
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!
First they're here, an' nen they're there,
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,
An' actin' most like grown folks does!—
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be
Skeerd at their tail 'at they happen to see;—
But the funniest thing in the world they do
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

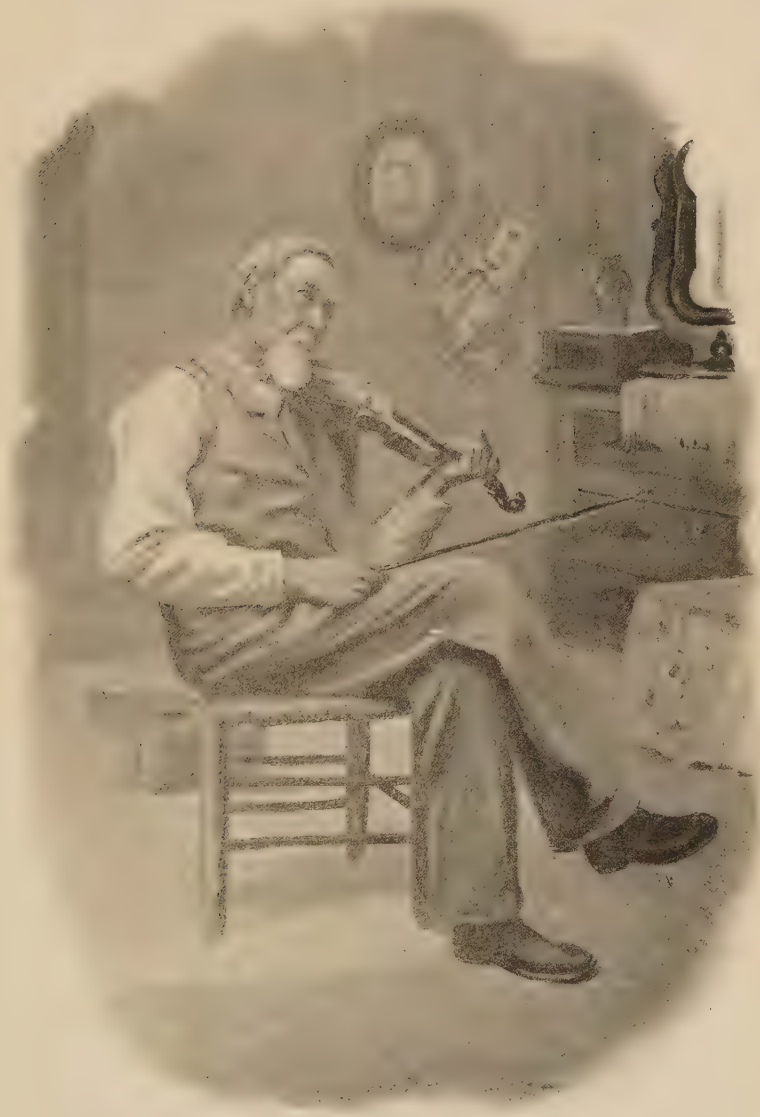
MY FIDDLE

Old Benj. Johnson's fiddle-playin'
'S most as common as he's sayin'.

MY fiddle? — Well, I kindo' keep her handy, don't
you know!
Though I ain't so much inclined to tromp the strings and
switch the bow
As I was before the timber of my elbows got so dry,
And my fingers was more limber-like and caperish and
spry;
Yit I can plonk and plunk and plink,
And tune her up and play,
And jest lean back and laugh and wink
At ev'ry rainy day!

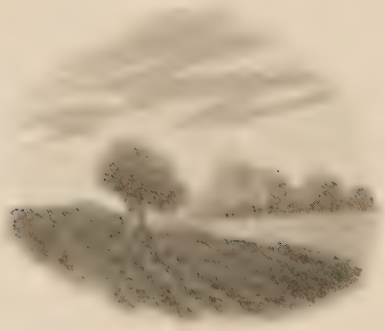
My playin' 's only middlin'—tunes I picked up when a boy—
The kindo'-sorto' fiddlin' that the folks calls "corda-roy";
"The Old Fat Gal," and "Rye-straw," and "My Sail-yor's on the Sea,"
Is the old cowtillions *I* "saw" when the ch'ice is left to me;
And so I plunk and plonk and plink
And rosum-up my bow
And play the tunes that makes you think
The devil's in your toe!

I was allus a romancin', do-less boy, to tell the truth,
A-fiddlin' and a-dancin', and a-wastin' of my youth,
And a-actin' and a-cuttin'-up all sorts o' silly pranks
That wasn't worth a button o' anybody's thanks!
But they tell me, when I ust to plink
And plonk and plunk and play,
My music seemed to have the kink
O' drivin' cares away!



That's how this here old fiddle's won my hart's indurin' love! —
From the strings acrost her middle, to the schreechin' keys above —
From her "apern," over "bridge," and to the ribbon round her throat,
She's a wooin', cooin' pigeon, singin' "Love me" ev'ry note!

And so I pat her neck, and plink
Her strings with lovin' hands,—
And, list'nin' clos't, I sometimes think
She kindo' understands!



THE HEREAFTER

HEREAFTER! O we need not waste
Our smiles or tears, whate'er befall:
No happiness but holds a taste
Of something sweeter, after all;—
No depth of agony but feels
Some fragment of abiding trust,—
Whatever death unlocks or seals,
The mute Beyond is just.

WE TO SIGH INSTEAD OF SING

"RAIN and rain! and rain and rain!"
Yesterday we muttered
Grimly as the grim refrain
That the thunders uttered:
All the heavens under cloud —
All the sunshine sleeping;
All the grasses limply bowed
With their weight of weeping.

Sigh and sigh! and sigh and sigh!
Never end of sighing;
Rain and rain for our reply —
Hopes half-drowned and dying;
Peering through the window-pane,
Naught but endless raining —
Endless sighing, and, as vain,
Endlessly complaining.

Shine and shine! and shine and shine!
Ah! *to-day* the splendor! —
All this glory yours and mine —
God! but God is tender!
We to sigh instead of sing,
Yesterday, in sorrow,
While the Lord was fashioning
This for our To-morrow!

DAN PAINE

OLD friend of mine, whose chiming name
Has been the burthen of a rhyme
Within my heart since first I came
To know thee in thy mellow prime:
With warm emotions in my breast
That can but coldly be expressed,
And hopes and wishes wild and vain,
I reach my hand to thee, Dan Paine.

In fancy, as I sit alone
In gloomy fellowship with care,
I hear again thy cheery tone,
And wheel for thee an easy chair;
And from my hand the pencil falls —
My book upon the carpet sprawls,
As eager soul and heart and brain,
Leap up to welcome thee, Dan Paine.

A something gentle in thy mien,
A something tender in thy voice,
Has made my trouble so serene,
I can but weep, from very choice.
And even then my tears, I guess,
Hold more of sweet than bitterness,
And more of gleaming shine than rain,
Because of thy bright smile, Dan Paine.

The wrinkles that the years have spun
And tangled round thy tawny face,
Are kinked with laughter, every one,
And fashioned in a mirthful grace:
And though the twinkle of thine eyes
Is keen as frost when Summer dies,
It can not long as frost remain
While thy warm soul shines out, Dan Paine.

And so I drain a health to thee: —
May merry Joy and jolly Mirth
Like children clamber on thy knee,
And ride thee round the happy earth!
And when, at last, the hand of Fate
Shall lift the latch of Canaan's gate
And usher me in thy domain,
Smile on me just as now, Dan Paine.

DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL

I

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin
Up and at it airly, and the orchard-blossoms bobbin'!
Peekin' from the winder, half-awake, and wishin'
I could go to sleep ag'in as well as go a-fishin'!

II

On the apern o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o' clover:
Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to dinner.

III

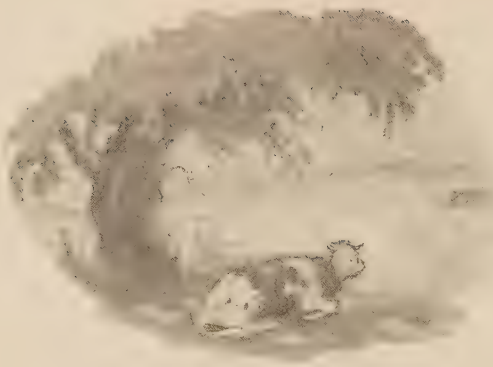
Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin'
In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps a-thinkin':—
Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to cherr me;
And fiddle on the kitchen-wall a-jist a-eechin' fer me!

KISSING THE ROD

O HEART of mine, we shouldn't
Worry so!
What we've missed of calm we couldn't
Have, you know!
What we've met of stormy pain,
And of sorrow's driving rain,
We can better meet again,
If it blow!

We have erred in that dark hour
We have known,
When our tears fell with the shower,
All alone!—
Were not shine and shower blent
As the gracious Master meant?—
Let us temper our content
With His own.

For, we know, not every morrow
Can be sad;
So, forgetting all the sorrow
We have had,
Let us fold away our fears,
And put by our foolish tears,
And through all the coming years
Just be glad.



AT UTTER LOAF

I

AN afternoon as ripe with heat
As might the golden pippin be
With mellowness if at my feet
It dropped now from the apple-tree
My hammock swings in lazily.

II

The boughs about me spread a shade
That shields me from the sun, but weaves
With breezy shuttles through the leaves
Blue rifts of skies, to gleam and fade
Upon the eyes that only see
Just of themselves, all drowsily

III

Above me drifts the fallen skein
  Of some tired spider, looped and blown,
As fragile as a strand of rain,
  Across the air, and upward thrown
  By breaths of hayfields newly mown —
So glimmering it is and fine,
I doubt these drowsy eyes of mine.

IV

Far-off and faint as voices pent
  In mines and heard from underground,
Come murmurs as of discontent,
  And clamorings of sullen sound
The city sends me, as, I guess,
    To vex me, though they do but bless
    Me in my drowsy fastnesses.

V

I have no care. I only know
  My hammock hides and holds me here
  In lands of shade a prisoner:
While lazily the breezes blow
  Light leaves of sunshine over me,
And back and forth and to and fro
    I swing, enwrapped in some hushed glee,
    Smiling at all things drowsily.

A BOY'S MOTHER

MY Mother she's so good to me,
Ef I was good as I could be,
I couldn't be as good — no, sir! —
Can't any boy be good as her!

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;
She loves me when I'm good er bad;
An', what's a funniest thing, she says
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—
That don't hurt,— but it hurts to see
Her cryin'.—Nen *I* cry; an' nen
We *bofe* cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,
An' grabs me up an' pats my head;
An' I hug *her,* an' hug my Pa
An' love him purt' nigh much as Ma.

EXCEEDING ALL

LONG LIFE'S a lovely thing to know,
With lovely health and wealth, forsooth,
And lovely name and fame — But O
The loveliness of Youth!

WHILE THE HEART BEATS YOUNG

WHILE the heart beats young! — O the splendor of the Spring,
With all her dewy jewels on, is not so fair a thing!
The fairest, rarest morning of the blossom-time of May
Is not so sweet a season as the season of to-day
While Youth's diviner climate folds and holds us, close caressed,
As we feel our mothers with us by the touch of face and breast; —
Our bare feet in the meadows, and our fancies up among
The airy clouds of morning — while the heart beats young.

While the heart beats young and our pulses leap and dance,
With every day a holiday and life a glad romance,—
We hear the birds with wonder, and with wonder watch their flight —
Standing, still the more enchanted, both of hearing and of sight,
When they have vanished wholly,— for, in fancy, wing-to-wing
We fly to Heaven with them; and, returning, still we sing
The praises of this *lower* Heaven with tireless voice and tongue,
Even as the Master sanctions — while the heart beats young.

While the heart beats young! —While the heart beats young!
O green and gold old Earth of ours, with azure overhung
And looped with rainbows! — grant us yet this grassy lap of thine —
We would be still thy children, through the shower and the shine!
So pray we, lisping, whispering, in childish love and trust,
With our beseeching hands and faces lifted from the dust
By fervor of the poem, all unwritten and unsung,
Thou givest us in answer, while the heart beats young.

THE TWINS

ONE'S the pictur' of his Pa,
And the *other* of her Ma —
Jes the bossest pair o' babies 'at a mortal ever saw!
And we love 'em as the bees
Loves the blossoms of the trees
A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

One's got her Mammy's eyes —
Soft and blue as Apurl-skies —
With the same sort of a *smile,* like — Yes, and mouth about her size,—
Dimples, too, in cheek and chin,
'At my lips jes *wallers* in,
A-goin' to work, er gittin' home ag'in!

And the *other* — Well, they say
That he's got his Daddy's way
O' bein' ruther soberfied, er ruther extry gay,—
That he either cries his best,
Er he laughs his howlin'est —
Like all he lacked was buttons and a vest!

Look at *her!* — and look at *him!* —
Talk about yer "Cheru-*bim!*"
Roll 'em up in dreams together, rosy arm and
chubby limb!
O we love 'em as the bees
Loves the blossoms of the trees,
A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

THE WILLOW

WHO shall sing a simple ditty all about the Willow,
Dainty-fine and delicate as any bending spray
That dandles high the happy bird that flutters there to trill a
Tremulously tender song of greeting to the May.

Bravest, too, of all the trees! — none to match your daring,—
First of greens to greet the Spring and lead in leafy sheen; —
Aye, and you're the last — almost into winter wearing
Still the leaf of loyalty — still the badge of green.

Ah, my lovely Willow! — let the Waters lilt your graces,—
They alone with limpid kisses lave your leaves above,
Flashing back your sylvan beauty, and in shady places
Peering up with glimmering pebbles, like the eyes of love.

BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS-SHOW

AT Billy Miller's Circus-Show —
In their old stable where it's at —
The boys pays twenty pins to go,
An' gits their money's-worth at that! —
'Cause Billy he can climb and chalk
His stockin'-feet an' purt'-nigh walk
A tight-rope — yes, an' ef he fall
He'll ketch, an' "skin a cat"—'at's all!

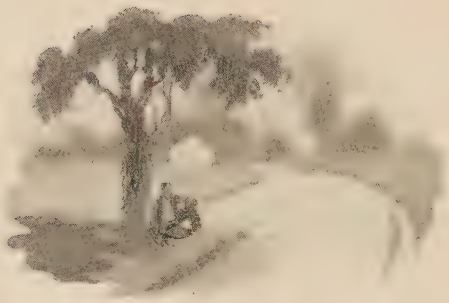
He ain't afeard to swing and hang
Ist by his legs! — an' mayby stop
An' yell "Look out!" an' nen — k-spang! —
He'll let loose, upside-down, an' drop
Wite on his hands! An' nen he'll do
"Contortion-acts" — ist limber through
As "Injarubber Mens" 'at goes
With shore-fer-certain circus-shows!

At Billy Miller's Circus-Show
He's got a circus-ring — an' they's
A dressin'-room,— so's he can go
An' dress an' paint-up when he plays
He's somepin' else; —'cause sometimes he's
"Ringmaster" — bossin' like he please —
An' sometimes "Ephalunt" — er "Bare-
Back Rider," prancin' out o' there!

An' sometimes — an' the best of all! —
He's "The Old Clown," an' got on clo'es
All stripud,— an' white hat, all tall
An' peakud — like in shore-'nuff shows,—
An' got three-cornered red-marks, too,
On his white cheeks — like all Clowns do! —
An' you'd ist *die,* the way he sings
An' dances an' says funny things!

THE HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN

I BELIEVE *all* childern's good,
Ef they're only *understood,*—
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,
'S jes as good as they kin be!



A NOON INTERVAL

A DEEP, delicious hush in earth and sky —
A gracious lull — since, from its wakening,
The morn has been a feverish, restless thing
In which the pulse of Summer ran too high
And riotous, as though its heart went nigh
To bursting with delights past uttering:
Now — as an o'erjoyed child may cease to sing
All falteringly at play, with drowsy eye
Draining the pictures of a fairy-tale
To brim his dreams with — there comes o'er the day
A loathful silence wherein all sounds fail
Like loitering tones of some faint roundelay . . .
No wakeful effort longer may avail —
The wand waves, and the dozer sinks away.

A PASSING HAIL

LET us rest ourselves a bit!
Worry? — wave your hand to it —
Kiss your finger-tips, and smile
It farewell a little while.

Weary of the weary way
We have come from Yesterday,
Let us fret us not, instead,
Of the weary way ahead.

Let us pause and catch our breath
On the hither side of death,
While we see the tender shoots
Of the grasses — not the roots,—

While we yet look down — not up —
To seek out the buttercup
And the daisy where they wave
O'er the green home of the grave.

Let us launch us smoothly on
The soft billows of the lawn,
And drift out across the main
Of our childish dreams again:

Voyage off, beneath the trees,
O'er the field's enchanted seas,
Where the lilies are our sails,
And our sea-gulls, nightingales:

Where no wilder storm shall beat
Than the wind that waves the wheat,
And no tempest-burst above
The old laughs we used to love:

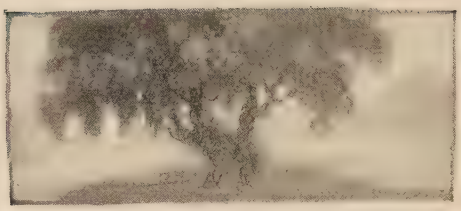
Lose all troubles — gain release,
Languor, and exceeding peace,
Cruising idly o'er the vast,
Calm mid-ocean of the Past.

Let us rest ourselves a bit!
Worry? — Wave your hand to it —
Kiss your finger-tips, and smile
It farewell a little while.

ON ANY ORDENARY MAN IN A HIGH STATE OF LAUGHTURE AND DELIGHT

Let the old man laugh and be
Blest therefor eternally!

AS it's give' me to perceive,
I most certin'y believe
When a man's jest glad plum' through,
God's pleased with him, same as you.



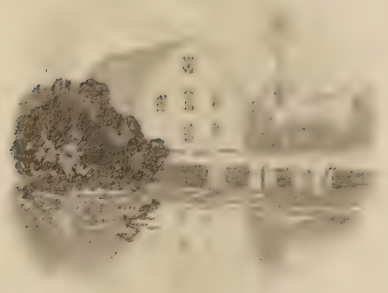
THERE WAS A CHERRY-TREE

THERE was a cherry-tree. Its bloomy snows
Cool even now the fevered sight that knows
No more its airy visions of pure joy —
As when you were a boy.

There was a cherry-tree. The Bluejay set
His blue against its white — O blue as jet
He seemed there then! — But *now* — Whoever knew
He was so pale a blue!

There was a cherry-tree — Our child-eyes saw
The miracle: — Its pure white snows did thaw
Into a crimson fruitage, far too sweet
But for a boy to eat.

There was a cherry-tree, give thanks and joy! —
There was a bloom of snow — There was a boy —
There was a Bluejay of the realest blue —
And fruit for both of you.



AT BROAD RIPPLE

OH, LUXURY! Beyond the heat
And dust of town, with dangling feet
Astride the rock below the dam,
In the cool shadows where the calm
Rests on the stream again, and all
Is silent save the waterfall,—
I bait my hook and cast my line,
And feel the best of life is mine.

No high ambition may I claim —
I angle not for lordly game
Of trout, or bass, or wary bream —
A black perch reaches the extreme
Of my desires; and "goggle-eyes"
Are not a thing that I despise;
A sunfish, or a "chub," or "cat"—
A "silver-side" — yea, even that!

In eloquent tranquillity
The waters lisp and talk to me.
Sometimes, far out, the surface breaks,
As some proud bass an instant shakes
His glittering armor in the sun,
And romping ripples, one by one,
Come dallying across the space
Where undulates my smiling face.

The river's story flowing by,
Forever sweet to ear and eye,
Forever tenderly begun —
Forever new and never done.
Thus lulled and sheltered in a shade
Where never feverish cares invade,
I bait my hook and cast my line,
And feel the best of life is mine.

LITTLE DAVID

THE mother of the little boy that sleeps
Has blest assurance, even as she weeps:
She knows her little boy has now no pain —
No further ache, in body, heart or brain;
All sorrow is lulled for him — all distress
Passed into utter peace and restfulness.—
All health that heretofore has been denied —
All happiness, all hope, and all beside
Of childish longing, now he clasps and keeps
In voiceless joy — the little boy that sleeps.

A FULL HARVEST

Jes' you listen and look wise
'N' let the old man sermonize!

SEEMS like a feller'd ort 'o jes' to-day
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,
Seein' sich craps! I'll undertake to say
There 're no wheat's ever turned out thataway
Afore this season! — Folks is keerless tho',
And too fergitful —'caze we'd ort 'o show
More thankfulness! — Jes' looky hyonder, hey? —
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground —
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in-two
Like honey-comb and gaumin' it around
The field — like it had nothin' else to do
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!

LET SOMETHING GOOD BE SAID

WHEN over the fair fame of friend or foe
The shadow of disgrace shall fall; instead
Of words of blame, or proof of thus and so,
Let something good be said.

Forget not that no fellow-being yet
May fall so low but love may lift his head:
Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet,
If something good be said.

No generous heart may vainly turn aside
In ways of sympathy; no soul so dead
But may awaken strong and glorified,
If something good be said.

And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,
And by the cross on which the Savior bled,
And by your own souls' hope of fair renown,
Let something good be said!

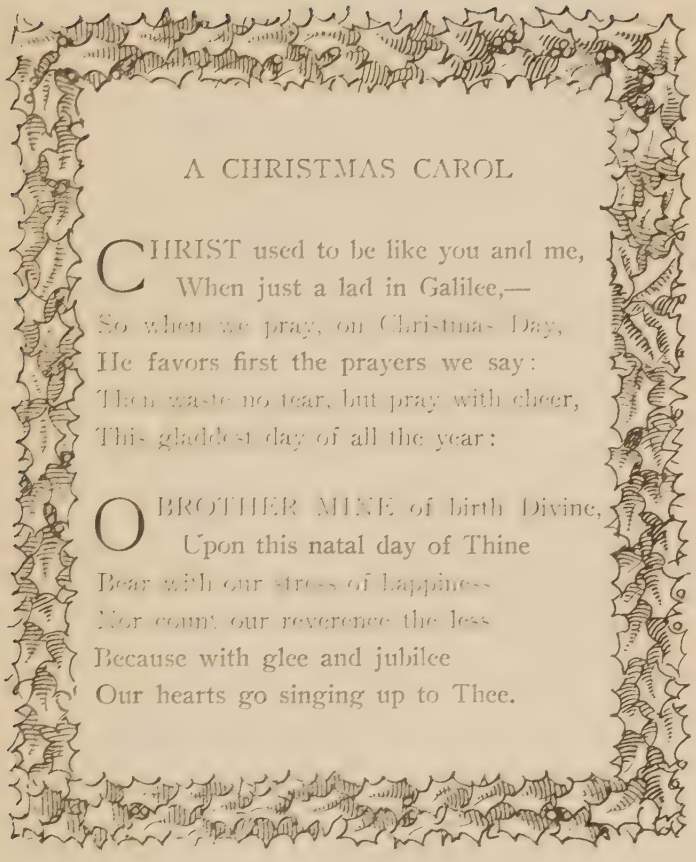
HER SMILE OF CHEER AND VOICE OF SONG

ANNA HARRIS RANDALL

SPRING fails, in all its bravery of brilliant gold and green,—
The sun, the grass, the leafing tree, and all the dazzling scene
Of dewy morning — orchard blooms,
And woodland blossoms and perfumes
With bird-songs sown between.

Yea, since *she* smiles not any more, so every flowery thing
Fades, and the birds seem brooding o'er her silence as they sing —
Her smile of cheer and voice of song
Seemed so divinely to belong
To ever-joyous Spring!

Nay, still she smiles.— Our eyes are blurred and see not through our tears:
And still her rapturous voice is heard, tho' not of mortal ears: —
Now ever doth she smile and sing
Where Heaven's unending Clime of Spring
Reclaims those gifts of hers.



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHRIST used to be like you and me,
When just a lad in Galilee,—
So when we pray, on Christmas Day,
He favors first the prayers we say:
Then waste no tear, but pray with cheer,
This gladdest day of all the year:

O BROTHER MINE of birth Divine,
Upon this natal day of Thine
Bear with our stress of happiness
Nor count our reverence the less
Because with glee and jubilee
Our hearts go singing up to Thee.

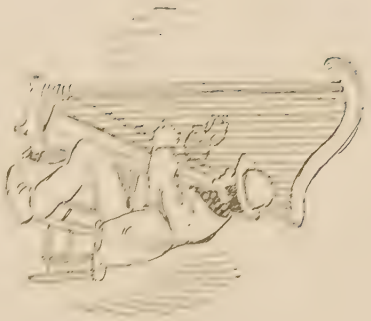
THE HARPER

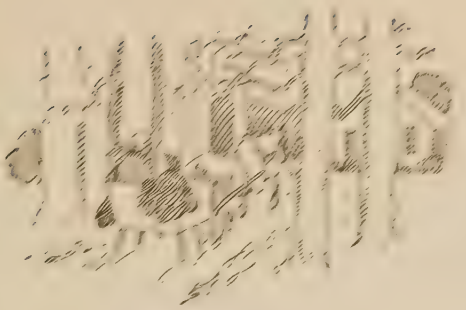
LIKE a drift of faded blossoms
  Caught in a slanting rain,
His fingers glimpsed down the strings of his harp
  In a tremulous refrain:

Patter and tinkle, and drip and drip!
  Ah! but the chords were rainy sweet!
And I closed my eyes and I bit my lip,
  As he played there in the street.

Patter, and drip, and tinkle!
  And there was the little bed
In the corner of the garret,
  And the rafters overhead!

And there was the little window —
  Tinkle, and drip, and drip! —
The rain above, and a mother's love,
  And God's companionship!





THE HOOSIER'S NIGHTMARE

Over the river and through the wood,
Now Grandmother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun! Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!

—*Oscar Fenner Perrine.*

F'ELK any boy 'at's little as me,
Er any little girl,
That-un's the goodest poetry-piece
In any book in the world!
An' ef grown-peoples was little again
I bet they'd say so, too,
If they'd go see their ole Grandma
Like our Pa lets us do!

Over the river an' through the wood,
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun! — Is the puddin' done? —
Hurrah for the punkin-pie!

An' 'll tell you *why* 'at's the goodest piece,
'Cause it's ist like *we* go
To *our* Gran'ma's, a-visitun there,
When our Pa he says so;
An' Ma she fixes my little cape-coat
An' little fuzz-cap; an' Pa
He tucks me away — an' yells *"Hoo-ray!"* —
An' whacks Ole Gray, an' drives the sleigh
Fastest you ever saw!

Over the river an' through the wood,
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy!
Hurrah for the fun! — Is the puddin' done? —
Hurrah for the punkin-pie!

An' Pa ist snuggles me 'tween his knees —
An' I he'p hold the lines,
An' peek out over the buffalo-robe; —
An' the wind ist *blows!* — an' the snow ist *snows!* —
An' the sun ist shines! an' shines! —

An' th' ole horse tosses his head an' coughs
The frost back in our face.—
An' I' ruther go to my Gran'ma's
Than any other place!

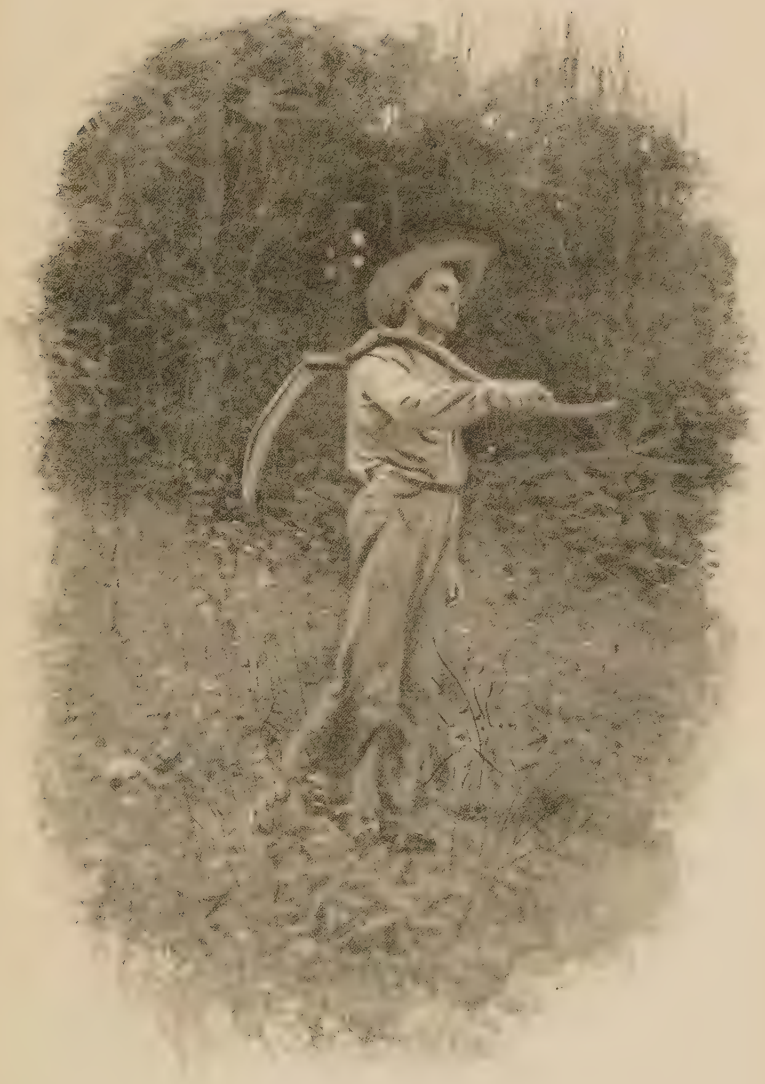
Over the river an' through the wood,
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy!
Hurrah fer the fun! — Is the puddin' done? —
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!

An' all the peoples they is in town
Watches us whizzin' past
To go a-visitun *our* Gran'ma's,
Like we all went there last; —
But *they* can't go, like ist *our* folks
An' Johnny an' Lotty, an' three
Er four neighber-childerns an' Robert-ut Wolney
An' Charley an' Maggy an' me!

Over the river an' through the wood,
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy!
Hurrah fer the fun! — Is the puddin' done? —
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!

AUTUMN

AS a harvester, at dusk,
Faring down some woody trail
Leading homeward through the musk
Of May-apple and pawpaw,
Hazel-bush, and spice and haw,—
So comes Autumn, swart and hale,
Drooped of frame and slow of stride,
But withal an air of pride
Looming up in stature far
Higher than his shoulders are;
Weary both in arm and limb,
Yet the wholesome heart of him
Sheer at rest and satisfied.



Greet him as with glee of drums
And glad cymbals, as he comes!
Robe him fair, O Rain and Shine!
He the Emperor — the King —
Royal lord of everything
Sagging Plenty's granary floors
And out-bulging all her doors;
He the god of corn and wine,
Honey, milk, and fruit and oil —
Lord of feast, as lord of toil —
Jocund host of yours and mine!

Ho! the revel of his laugh! —
Half is sound of winds, and half
Roar of ruddy blazes drawn
Up the throats of chimneys wide,
Circling which, from side to side,
Faces — lit as by the Dawn,
With her highest tintings on
Tip of nose, and cheek, and chin —
Smile at some old fairy-tale
Of enchanted lovers, in
Silken gown and coat of mail,

With a retinue of elves
Merry as their very selves,
Trooping ever, hand in hand,
Down the dales of Wonderland.

Then the glory of his song! —
Lifting up his dreamy eyes —
Singing haze across the skies;
Singing clouds that trail along
Towering tops of trees that seize
Tufts of them to stanch the breeze;
Singing slanted strands of rain
In between the sky and earth,
For the lyre to mate the mirth
And the might of his refrain:
Singing southward-flying birds
Down to us, and afterwards
Singing them to flight again;
Singing blushes to the cheeks
Of the leaves upon the trees —
Singing on and changing these
Into pallor, slowly wrought,
Till the little, moaning creeks
Bear them to their last farewell,

As Elaine the lovable
Was borne down to Lancelot.—
Singing drip of tears, and then
Drying them with smiles again.

Singing apple, peach and grape,
Into roundest, plumpest shape;
Rosy ripeness to the face
Of the pippin; and the grace
Of the dainty stamin-tip
To the huge bulk of the pear,
Pendant in the green caress
Of the leaves, and glowing through
With the tawny laziness
Of the gold that Ophir knew,—
Haply, too, within its rind
Such a cleft as bees may find,
Bungling on it half aware,
And wherein to see them sip
Fancy lifts an oozy lip,
And the singer's falter there.

Sweet as swallows swimming through
Eddyings of dusk and dew,

Singing happy scenes of home
Back to sight of eager eyes
That have longed for them to come,
Till their coming is surprise
Uttered only by the rush
Of quick tears and prayerful hush:
Singing on, in clearer key,
Hearty palms of you and me
Into grasps that tingle still
Rapturous, and ever will!
Singing twank and twang of strings —
Trill of flute and clarinet
In a melody that rings
Like the tunes we used to play,
And our dreams are playing yet!
Singing lovers, long astray,
Each to each; and, sweeter things,—
Singing in their marriage-day,
And a banquet holding all
These delights for festival.

THERE IS EVER A SONG SOMEWHERE

THERE is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
There is ever a something sings alway:
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;
And in and out, when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear —
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear —
There is ever a song somewhere!

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
In the midnight black, or the mid-day blue;
The robin pipes when the sun is here,
And the cricket chirrups the whole night through;
The buds may blow, and the fruit may grow,
And the autumn leaves drop crisp and sear;
But whether the sun, or the rain, or the snow,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear.

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear —
There is ever a song somewhere!

GOD BLESS US EVERY ONE

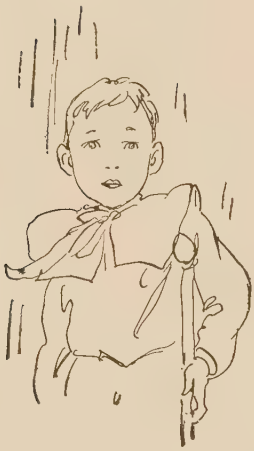
"GOD bless us every one!" prayed Tiny Tim,
Crippled and dwarfed of body, yet so tall
Of soul, we tiptoe earth to look on him.
High towering over all.

He loved the loveless world, nor dreamed indeed
That it at best could give to him, the while,
But pitying glances, when his only need
Was but a cheery smile.

And thus he prayed, "God bless us every one!"—
Enfolding all the creeds within the span
Of his child-heart; and so, despising none,
Was nearer saint than man.

I like to fancy God, in Paradise,
Lifting a finger o'er the rhythmic swing
Of chiming harp and song, with eager eyes
Turned earthward, listening —

The Anthem stilled — the Angels leaning there
Above the golden walls — the morning sun
Of Christmas bursting flower-like with the prayer,
"God bless us every one!"



THE PRAYER PERFECT

DEAR Lord! kind Lord!
Gracious Lord! I pray
Thou wilt look on all I love,
Tenderly to-day!
Weed their hearts of weariness;
Scatter every care
Down a wake of angel-wings
Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing
All release from pain;
Let the lips of laughter
Overflow again;
And with all the needy
O divide, I pray,
This vast treasure of content
That is mine to-day!